

**Wichita-Sedgwick County
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Public Involvement Policy

*Involving the Community in
Transportation Planning*

Adopted: 02-10-2005

Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Public Involvement Policy

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The MPO Policy Body issues this document on December 9, 2004 for public comment for a period of not less than 45 days prior to formal adoption or revision.

Copies of this document are available through the MPO, KDOT, Internet, and upon request

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Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Public Involvement Policy

Introduction

The Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Planning Organization provides transportation planning to all the cities within Sedgwick County, and the cities of Andover and Mulvane in Sumner and Butler Counties.

Transportation planning is an integral part of community planning. Transportation plays a significant role in land use and community development, requiring meaningful input by the public to assure an understanding of the concerns of communities. This policy provides a mechanism for bringing a broad range of diverse viewpoints and values into the MPO decision-making process.

The Public Involvement Policy (PIP) of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required by 23 CFR 450.316, and the MPO is committed to a public involvement program that will involve all citizens within the boundary area. The public involvement process described herein applies, at a minimum, to the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, and significant transportation studies.

Purpose

The Public Involvement Policy (PIP) provides a guide for proactive involvement of citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, and other interested parties in transportation decisions. The PIP includes public involvement in the development and updates of the:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP),
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP),
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and
- Significant transportation studies.

Our goal is to develop, with the public, effective transportation decisions that are responsive to local conditions. Performance standards for these proactive public involvement processes include early and continuous involvement; reasonable public availability of technical and other information; collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria and mitigation needs; open public meetings; and open access to the transportation planning and decision-making process. This policy is a stand-alone document used in concert with the MPO PIP Tool Box outlining specific information on various public involvement activities.

Environmental Justice

In conformance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the US DOT issued Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. The intent of this order is to ensure all federally funded transportation related programs, policies, or activities having the potential to adversely or negatively effect human health of the environment involve a planning and programming process that explicitly considers the effects on minority and low-income populations.

There are three fundamental Environmental Justice (EJ) principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

The MPO will use demographic information, public involvement activities, and community contacts to address this regulation. EJ principles will be incorporated into the development and updates of the LRTP and Project Selection Criteria (PSC) associated with the TIP.

Open Meetings

All meetings of the MPO Policy Board, its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Coordinating Committee on Transportation Planning (CCT), and its other advisory committees are open to the public. Metropolitan Planning Organization meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities. Arrangements for special assistance or an interpreter can be made by calling the Metropolitan Planning Organization office at 268-4391 at least three business days in advance.

Provision Of Timely Information

In order to assure that citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties receive timely information about transportation issues and processes, the Metropolitan Planning Organization will:

- Prepare and publish a quarterly newsletter communicating relevant transportation issues, results of technical activities, information on policy issues and decision-making activities, and information on upcoming public meetings. Distribution of the newsletter will be accomplished through electronic or postal mailing to those groups and individuals maintained on the master mailing list as referenced under the section Adequate Public Notice.

- Maintain a website with meeting agendas, minutes and other pertinent information regarding the activities of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Provide news releases to the local media to inform the public on all significant transportation issues and activities.
- Host public meetings at appropriate times and locations within the study area to present technical findings and solicit public input on the Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, significant transportation studies and other transportation planning issues.

Reasonable Public Access To Technical And Policy Information

The MPO staff is available by appointment to discuss technical and policy information with citizens and other interested parties during normal business hours. By prior arrangement, members of the MPO staff will meet with civic groups and organizations after normal business working hours. The MPO maintains a library of past and current transportation planning studies and materials available for review during normal business hours. Copies of materials are available at reproduction and postage costs consistent with City of Wichita policy. Copies of proposed documents and major updates of the Transportation Improvement Program and the Long Range Transportation Plan will be posted on the MPO's website and forwarded to the Wichita Public Library System for public comment and review.

Adequate Public Notice

The MPO maintains a master mailing list including neighborhood organizations, community groups, business and professional groups, environmental and special interest groups, locally elected and appointed officials, transit union, and affected public agencies. This mailing list is used to notify interested parties of upcoming board and committee meetings. For public meetings, announcements will also be placed in the local general circulation newspaper and media a minimum of one (1) week in advance of the meeting date. Suitably sized announcements will also run in alternative publications. Notice of all public hearings will be published a minimum of two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting date.

Programs

The PIP involves public involvement activities for the following programs:

- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The TIP identifies federally funded and regionally significant projects for short-term implementation. To update the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) once every two (2) years, the MPO will hold an initial public meeting to explain the process and begin the call for projects. Each implementing agency (city, county, state, and transit provider) will evaluate and rank their projects prior to submission to the MPO. The Technical Advisory Committee will then technically evaluate all proposed projects according to the MPO Policy Board's approved criteria. The projects will be presented to the Policy Board by project category along with technical groupings, submitting agency priorities, Technical Advisory Committee notations, and public comments. Revisions to the draft TIP based on comments from the Policy Board and the public will be presented minimum two (2) weeks later at a Policy Board workshop

- **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

The LRTP addresses transportation elements including roadway improvements, new roadways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, environmental concerns, and population aspects of the area. In conjunction with major updates of the Long Range Transportation Plan the MPO will host public meetings to involve interested parties in the early stages of the plan development. After a draft Long Range Transportation Plan has been developed and prior to Policy Board adoption, the MPO will host at least one (1) formal public meeting to solicit comments on the draft plan. A final draft Long Range Transportation Plan will be presented to the Policy Board with public comments received for consideration prior to adoption. A public involvement process/schedule will be created for each update of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

- **Significant Transportation Studies**

The MPO or lead agency will host at least one (1) formal public meeting to solicit comments on all alternative strategies to be considered in the early stages of the significant transportation study process. After draft study results are reported to the Policy Board, at least one (1) formal public meeting will then be held to solicit comments on the draft results. Final study results will then be considered by the Policy Board for adoption and inclusion into the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. The minimum requirements of this public involvement process will be in effect for all significant transportation studies regardless of the lead agency.

Public Involvement Policy Components

The following table outlines the time periods and overviews public meeting information for the various MPO plans and programs. Activities outlined in this document are general in description, and are outlined in greater detail in the MPO PIP Tool Box document.

	Legal Notice	Comment Period and Public meeting	Summary and Disposition of Comments
PIP	1) Local and Planning Area Wide Newspapers. 2) Clerk's Office of Towns and Small Cities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, Coordinating committee and Policy Board meetings. 	Summary of significant comments provided to the TAC, MAPC, and in the final document.
TIP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, and Policy Board meetings. 	
LRTP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, Coordinating committee and Policy Board meetings. 	
UPWP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, Coordinating committee and Policy Board meetings. 	
Other/ MIS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, and Policy Board meetings. 	

Exceptional Situations

In the event the Policy Board adopts a plan, project, program or study that is "significantly" or "substantially" different in form, content, or value from that presented at the last public meeting, members of the public may request in writing that the Policy Board hold another public meeting for comment on the adopted version of the plan, project or program. If the Policy Board deems an additional public meeting necessary, comments from that meeting will be duly recorded and provided to the Policy Board for additional consideration and a final decision on the matter.

Response To Public Input

All public input received by the MPO at public meetings will be documented in official meeting minutes (if appropriate) or in meeting summaries. This documentation along with any written comments received will be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee, Policy Board, and appropriate bodies to address the concerns and comments submitted by the public. Actions taken will be presented to the TAC and Policy Board, and documented in official meeting minutes.

Traditionally Underserved

The MPO has the responsibility to coordinate an active outreach program aimed at informing and educating interested parties in the transportation planning process. This outreach program will include identifying and involving traditionally underserved segments of the metropolitan study area.

Documentation Of Significant Comments

When significant written and/or oral comments are received from the public on the draft Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, or significant transportation study, a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of such comments will be presented to the TAC and Policy Board, and made a part of the final document.

Amendments To TIP And LRTP

Routine amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program occurring between two (2) years updates require a two-step process. To permit adequate public review and comment, amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program will be presented at a meeting of the Policy Board with action on the amendment occurring at the subsequent Policy Board meeting. Amendments that delete or substantially change the scope of a project will be explicitly listed on both the presentation and action agendas for the Policy Board meetings.

Routine amendments to the Long Range Transportation Plan occurring between major updates also require a two-step process. To permit adequate public review and comment, amendments to the Long Range Transportation Plan will be presented at a meeting of the Policy Board with action on the amendment occurring at the following Policy Board meeting.

Amendments to both documents may be initiated concurrently. Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program or Long Range Transportation Plan requiring quick action due to impending federal or state requirements or deadlines (or for other reasons deemed in the community's best interest) may be accomplished by a 75% vote of the Policy Board quorum present to waive the routine two-step process. In these cases, the Policy Board will hold a special public hearing within their normal meeting agenda to specifically solicit public comment on the proposed amendment(s). These actions will be emphasized on the meeting agenda, which is mailed seven (7) days prior to the Policy Board meeting thus permitting special public attendance to comment on the action prior to adoption by the Policy board.

Periodic Review Of Public Involvement Policy

The MPO will review its public involvement policy once every two (2) years in terms of effectiveness in assuring that the process provides for full and open access to interested parties.

Coordination With Statewide Public Involvement Process

The MPO will coordinate wherever possible its public involvement process with the Kansas Department of Transportation's statewide public involvement process to enhance public consideration of transportation issues, plans, programs, and to reduce redundancies and costs.